



# NEWS RELEASE

## CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE

### WESLEY CHESBRO

#### Senator, 2nd District

Representing the North Coast and North Bay Counties of  
Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, Napa, Sonoma,  
and Solano Counties

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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#### **CHESBRO WORKING ON ENERGY RELIEF FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND FIXED-INCOME RESIDENTS Co-authors \$934 Million Conservation & Energy Assistance Bill**

**SACRAMENTO** – Working to protect small businesses and individuals on fixed incomes from skyrocketing energy prices, Senator Wesley Chesbro (D-Arcata) will co-author a \$934 million conservation bill which will fund energy efficiency and assistance programs throughout the State. The bill, SB 5x, will establish, fund, and implement critical programs that will help relieve small businesses of additional energy costs, as well as provide financial assistance to consumers.

SB 5x, while still being developed, is expected to appropriate \$934 million from the general fund to implement energy efficiency programs and supplement existing energy efficiency programs.

“Our immediate goal is to keep the lights on, keep rates reasonable, while making no compromises on protecting our natural environment,” Chesbro said. “We need to do this in a way that small businesses don’t close down, and that individuals who are on a fixed-incomes can continue to put food on the table and pay their rent.”

#### **ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

SB 5x will provide \$120 million for assistance programs that will help consumers on fixed incomes pay their energy bills. While the details of the legislation are still being negotiated, Senator Chesbro is advocating that all energy sources that California depends on for light and heat, including electricity, natural gas, and petroleum, be covered under this proposed funding.

- \$60 million for cash assistance to offset the increasing cost of heating and cooling homes for fixed-income consumers. The Program will provide emergency funds for crisis intervention for homeowners who are unable to pay the skyrocketing utility bills. A second financial assistance program will provide direct help to cover home energy cost for low-income families.

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- \$60 million is set aside to expand weatherization and energy efficiency programs. This is a long-term preventive plan to lower utility bills and conserve energy for homeowners. This program would also ensure the safety of home heaters and other gas appliances.

"Homeowners, especially low-income and retired people, need protection from the raising electric and gas rates," Chesbro added. "I believe building on the existing efforts of non-profit groups already in the community will provide the best service. I have heard from many seniors who are being forced to live in cold houses and families with small children who simply should not be without heat."

## **CONSERVATION**

A large portion of the funding, \$686 million, will go to creating and implementing energy efficient programs throughout California.

"California's economy needs to be protected from this crisis," Chesbro added. "One of the most cost-effective, efficient, and environmentally friendly ways of accomplishing this is by encouraging energy efficiency."

The following programs are proposed to reduce peak electricity demand use for residents and small businesses in the State:

- Require load management programs in State buildings and facilities.
- Reduce demand through innovative programs and proposals currently ineligible for State funding.
- Implement advanced metering systems for heating, air conditioning, ventilation, and lighting systems.
- Implement incentive programs for agriculture and irrigation districts to replace inefficient equipment.

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- Initiate incentives for the acceleration of self generation for State and municipal buildings through the expansion of existing programs.
- Create incentive programs for water and waste water peak usage reduction.
- Advocate the use of low-energy usage building material programs in schools, colleges, universities, and other non-residential buildings.
- Create incentives for purchasing energy efficient equipment such as refrigerators, heaters, and air conditioning units.
- Encourage the manufacturing of more efficient mobile housing stock.

“Our goal is to significantly increase the environmentally sound generation of energy in California so we do not have to rely on out-of-state generators,” Chesbro stated. “We can accomplish this by pulling together, conserving energy, and by looking at all of the possibilities.”

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